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STUDENT-ATHLETES AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY: ASSESSING INVOLVEMENT
FACTORS AND OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED THROUGH ATHLETIC
PARTICIPATION

by
Mark Fusiak

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
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Approved by _____
Dr. Burton R. Sisco

Date Approved May 7, 2009

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ABSTRACT

Mark Fusiak

STUDENT-ATHLETES AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY: ASSESSING INVOLVEMENT FACTORS AND OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED THROUGH ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

2008/09

Dr. Burton R. Sisco

M.A. Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to identify the attitudes of student-athletes toward their involvement in intercollegiate athletics. Student-athletes were surveyed from all sports sponsored by Rowan University. The survey included several measures to determine hours spent on academic and athletic pursuits, academic support and success, missed opportunities, and factors relating to personal development. Data analysis suggests that student-athletes spend equal amounts of time on academic and athletic pursuits. The study showed that female student-athletes reported missing out on opportunities because of their participation in athletics more than male student-athletes. The data also indicate that coaches, athletic administrators, and other members of the athletic department are largely responsible for the development of student-athletes. Overall, student-athletes were satisfied with their academic and athletic experience at Rowan University.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The NCAA established Division III to focus on the student athlete. Unlike Division I and II, which offer scholarships for athletics, Division III awards athletic scholarships only in special need based cases. In recent years, however, the difference between the divisions has narrowed. Student athletes in Division III have many of the same demands as their Division I and II counterparts. Travel schedules, practices, and off-season training programs place more emphasis on winning at the Division III level. However, since Division III is focused on the “student-athlete” there are limited special services afforded to them. The athletes are entitled to the same services as the general student body, but nothing more.

Statement of the Problem

With Division III becoming increasingly more competitive in terms of both academics and athletics, the priorities of student-athletes often become skewed. Division III consists of 420 member institutions from around the United States. Many of these institutions are highly competitive and successful in intercollegiate athletics. Considerable emphasis has been placed on institutions to ensure their student-athletes are performing adequately both in and out-of-the classroom and on the field. These expectations have led many student-athletes to make personal sacrifices in the name of athletics, academics, and extracurricular activities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if student-athletes are receiving a well-rounded and balanced college experience. With increased demands on time due to intercollegiate competition, are student-athletes compromising their ability to participate in activities off the field and outside of the classroom? Further, the study explored the attitudes and perceptions of student-athletes regarding their participation in intercollegiate athletics. The study looked to determine if the athletic department and institution had provided student-athletes with the necessary tools to obtain a favorable college experience while participating in athletic endeavors.

Significance of the Study

Previous research has focused on the types of involvement that student-athletes have undertaken during their college career. This study examined the reasons student-athletes participated in athletic pursuits and their perceptions regarding such involvement. This study should provide a base for future studies regarding the attitudes of student-athletes and how they contribute to student involvement. The views of these student-athletes provide insights into the lifestyle and culture of today's student-athlete.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study was limited to the student-athletes of Rowan University. It focused on the classification of student-athletes and their participation in athletic pursuits and the benefits derived from such participation. Only student-athletes who returned the survey were included in the data. This study represented a portion of the population and reflected the attitudes of Rowan University student-athletes. The sample is comprised of 201 student-athletes. A potential limitation exists in the form of survey question

construction and respondents' understanding of the intent of the questions. The questions were designed to elicit truthful responses from subjects about their experiences regarding personal involvement in the campus community but there always exists the possibility that some respondents may not have answered each question accurately and may have been swayed by what they perceived as the expected choice. An adapted survey from Washington State University (Crawford, 2007) was used in an effort to limit potentially leading questions and researcher bias. Variations were made in an effort to make questions applicable to Rowan University. A lack of knowledge about involvement in non-athletic pursuits by student-athletes might have contributed to incorrect or incomplete answers on the survey. The perspectives of the researcher may have exhibited a potential source of bias in the findings.

Operational Definitions

1. Athletic Involvement: Participation in activities directly or indirectly related to involvement in intercollegiate athletics. This constitutes participation in athletic competition, off-season training regiments, leadership opportunities provided through athletics, and intramural and club sports.
2. NCAA: National Collegiate Athletic Association; created in 1906, this organization is comprised of colleges, universities, and conferences competing in intercollegiate athletics. These member institutions contribute to athletics by creating and enforcing policies relating to eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid for athletes.
3. NCAA Division I: Members of this Division must meet the following requirements: offer seven male and seven female programs; six male programs and eight female programs. Division I is able to award athletic scholarships. Athletes participating in

this division receive services from the athletic department directly including academic advisors, tutor services, and supplemental instruction.

4. NCAA Division II: Must offer four programs to males and four programs to females. Institutions are able to award athletic scholarships.
5. NCAA Division III: Created in 1973; this division focuses on the student-athlete. Qualifying members must offer a minimum of four intercollegiate teams, two for men and two for women. Division III does not award scholarships to students based on athletic achievement. Exceptions are granted based on financial need. Student-athletes in this division are entitled to university provided services.
6. NJAC: The New Jersey Athletic Conference; is a member of NCAA Division III and includes the following institutions: Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Rowan University, Rutgers University-Camden, Rutgers University-Newark, The College of New Jersey, and William Patterson University. There are five colleges from New York and Connecticut that are members for football only.
7. Non-Athletic Involvement: Any involvement in organizations and activities not directly sponsored by the athletic department or intramural and club sports. These include leadership positions outside of athletics in areas such as student government, professional organizations, and academic organizations.
8. Student Athletes: Rowan University students that participated in intercollegiate athletics in addition to taking a minimum course load during the 2008-2009

academic year. Eligibility and compliance is determined based on the Division III classification.

9. Student Involvement: Participation by students in institutional sponsored activities that are designed to create a sense of community and further the learning experience. Examples include community service projects, academic clubs and organizations, athletics, Greek life, and intramurals.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do student-athletes spend more time focused on athletics or academics?
2. Have the services and programs offered through Rowan University adequately addressed the needs of student-athletes?
3. Are there areas of student life that student-athletes have missed out on due to their participation in athletics?
4. How do student-athletes rate their overall college experience?
5. Have athletics played a positive role in helping student-athletes to determine and meet their goals?

Overview of the Study

Chapter two reviews research relevant to this study. Included is a brief history of the NCAA and the development of Division III athletics. Also included are previous studies conducted regarding student involvement at the Division III level. Many researchers point to the lack of research at this level in comparison to the attention given to Division I.

Chapter three outlines survey construction, distribution, and data collection. Survey construction includes previous studies that utilized the survey and adaptations made in each case. This section also highlights adaptations that were relevant for this study at Rowan University with Division III student-athletes. A description of how the survey was distributed and collected is covered as well. It also provides an overview of the population who received the survey.

Chapter four discusses the findings of the research. This includes statistical analysis of the data and associated applications. The section provides an overview of additional limitations encountered during the research. Tables include relevant data and narrative discussion of the findings in this study.

Chapter five provides a summary of the study, discusses the findings, offers conclusions based on previous work, and gives recommendations for practice and further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Division III Policies

Division III athletes carry the financial responsibility of obtaining an education since they are not eligible for athletic based scholarships. The 2007 *NCAA Division III Manual* (2007) provides a number of guidelines for student-athletes regarding the acceptance of financial aid, work-study programs, and compensation. For example, student-athletes are eligible for academic based scholarships if offered by the institution and organizational scholarships provided they are NCAA approved. It is important to keep in mind that the NCAA restricts student-athletes from receiving financial compensation or accepting gifts based on athletic performance (NCAA, 2007). Student-athletes are also limited by the NCAA in terms of how much they can accept for services such as coaching and clinics. Many student-athletes work in order to finance their education but are limited by the NCAA on how much they can earn. These limitations, along with the absence of financial aid create an additional burden for Division III student athletes.

Astin's Involvement Theory

Astin (1984) defines student involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518). It is important to note that the academic experience according to Astin (1984) is not limited to

scholastic pursuits but encompasses participation in campus events, activities, and interaction with faculty and other students as elements of involvement. Hanson (2008) applies these findings to the student- athlete as she cites Astin (1984) who notes that athletic participation enhances the students' persistence. Astin (1984) further suggests that athletes expressed satisfaction in regard to academics, the learning environment, friendships and college administration.

A major function of involvement is the availability of time. Astin (1984) asserts that time is perhaps the most valuable resource a student has. It is time that allows a student to become involved on campus. Astin (1984) links involvement as a key factor in student satisfaction, success, and retention. Kuh (2004) points to previous research by Astin (1993), Pascarella & Terenzini (1991), and Pace (1980) that illustrates "...the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development" (p.1).

Iacovone (2007) highlights the salient points of Astin's postulates of involvement. Hanson (2008) also draws upon the tenets of Astin's postulates of Involvement Theory to substantiate the important role that involvement plays in the overall success of the student in the college environment. The first postulate defines involvement in terms of physical and psychological energy invested in an activity. The second states that involvement occurs on a continuum. The third postulate asserts that involvement has quantitative qualitative aspects. The fourth deals with the correlation between the amount of student learning and personal development and the qualitative and quantitative investment of student involvement with the endeavor. The fifth postulate indicates that educational policy and practice effectiveness is related to the ability of that policy or practice to

increase student involvement (Astin, 1984). Understanding the level of student involvement combined with an understanding of Astin's postulates of involvement can provide much needed information to guide the formulation of student programs that will foster increased participation (Astin, 1984). Such research provides the impetus for future development of programs and effective practices designed by administrators to offer students the tools they need to become more involved in a variety of activities. Astin's third postulate related to quantitative and qualitative involvement is especially applicable to the student athlete who tends to be very involved on a quantitative basis but less so qualitatively when applied to a wider variety of activities.

Trends in Athletics

Some of today's literature is focusing heavily on the changing landscape of college athletics. Tobin (2005) highlights the ever increasing demands on college athletes starting with longer seasons, more games, and championships as the barometer for success. While Division III supposedly creates the student first atmosphere, many wonder if that is really the case. Many institutions are updating facilities in an effort to increase their desirability to recruits. Also, many institutions have aligned themselves in conferences that have the highest probability of post-season participation (Tobin, 2005). This represents a departure from being in a conference that is geographically convenient into one that is competitive athletically. It further illustrates the emphasis Division III institutions place on the success of their intercollegiate teams.

Another sign of the emphasis placed on student-athletes can be seen in the decisions they make regarding academics. Wolverton (2007) indicates that many athletes choose alternate majors in order to pursue athletics. Certain majors require a student-

athlete to invest additional time in their studies, both in and out of the classroom. These demands, which often conflict with athletic participation, cause the student-athletes to select alternate majors (Wolverton, 2007). These findings suggest that some student-athletes place a greater value on the pursuit of athletics. Ryan (1990) indicates that student-athletes in all sports and levels invest similar amounts of time into athletics. This finding appears to be consistent with previous studies that show student-athletes at all divisions are generally similar to one another.

The Modern Division III Athlete

Perhaps one of the most important aspects to any research is the understanding of who or what is being studied. In this case, it is a student-athlete. This definition implies an individual who participates in intercollegiate athletics while pursuing a degree from a college or university (Watt & Moore, 2001). According to Watt and Moore, this definition is deceiving. The student-athlete encompasses more than simply a person who plays sports and goes to class. Student-athletes tend to spend more time with teammates and other student-athletes than they do with non-athletes (Watt & Moore, 2001). Among the reasons for this pattern is the understanding student-athletes have of each other. Being surrounded by those who understand the time commitments, pressures, and rewards of athletics is extremely comforting. Richards and Aries (1999) cited in their research that athletes had more difficulty meeting new people, in particular, those who do not participate in intercollegiate athletics. The ability to interact with other students outside of athletics is one of the primary reasons for this observation. Student-athletes indicated that they had trouble becoming involved with non-athletic extracurricular organizations and attending events sponsored by the institution (Richards & Aries, 1999).

This is important due to the growing belief that education takes place both inside and outside of the classroom and the interaction students have with one another is the most significant relationship they develop (Blimling & Whitt, 1999). Crawford (2007) further asserts that involvement in a variety of activities promotes self-awareness and insight into others. Crawford (2007) cites the work of Pascarella & Terenzini (1991, 2005) in displaying the cumulative effects of involvement for students. It is the combination of experiences that formulates the learning process, not a singular event or interaction (Crawford, 2007). The experiences students have and share with each other contributes to their development both academically and personally. Athletics itself is often considered a co-curriculum because of the experiences and opportunities it provides to students and for the large number that are involved (Ryan, 1990).

Being a student-athlete also helps shape part of a person's identity (Watt & Moore, 2001). The countless sacrifices including off-season workouts, daily practices, and road trips all contribute to the identity of an athlete. Athletes are both at the focal point of an institution when on the field, but also isolated by the nature of their sport as well. The modern student-athlete struggles to find a balance between the demands of athletics, academics, and social interaction. All three are a vital part of college life for a student-athlete.

Mignano, Brewer, Winter, and Van Raalte (2006) emphasize the extent to which a student's identity can be determined by athletics. They point out that many student athletes face difficulty transitioning to life without intercollegiate athletics through either graduation or an injury that terminates their participation. These students experience a significant sense of loss since so much of their identity was intertwined with their specific

role as an athlete. They are then faced with redefining themselves in the absence of this major element of their sense of self in the college milieu. This further supports Astin's (1984) assertion that exclusive involvement in one activity can actually detract from a more complete sense of self. Ryan (1990) recognizes the potential dichotomy within athletics in that it can "...spur self-actualization toward optimal health or to hinder the development of the whole person" (p. 15). The challenge this poses is to help students realize that the athletic experience is only one component of themselves and does not define their total identity. Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007) demonstrate in their study that the majority of student-athletes identify themselves as athletes first and students second. The study also suggests that student-athletes perceive both positive and negative treatment from faculty members as a result of their participation in intercollegiate athletics. Such beliefs, particularly those that student-athletes attribute as a direct cause of their involvement in athletics, can have an impact on the development of the student from numerous perspectives (Ryan, 1990).

The increasing demands on student-athletes have raised many questions pertaining to their involvement in intercollegiate athletics. Astin (1984) points out that students invest their time and energy in different ways at different times. The way students invest their time and energy contributes to their development. Most institutions have mission statements that revolve around the development of a well rounded individual. This indicates a desire to have students participating in various ways rather than a singular focus. Richards and Aries (1999) noted that while athletes and non-athletes spent equal amounts of time on academics, extracurricular activities weighed heavily in favor of student-athletes. However, it is important to realize the distribution of

time between the two groups. The majority of time spent involved with extracurricular activities centered on games and practices for student-athletes. A minimal amount of time was dedicated to other activities.

Student involvement also varies depending on the type of institution that is attended. Women's colleges tend to promote involvement outside of athletics for their students in comparison to their coeducational counterparts (Mignano et al., 2006). However, it is important to understand that students are more likely to identify with a particular role due to the absence of a male presence on campus. Mignano et al., attribute this to the women filling roles and positions that may otherwise be socially associated with men. Student-athletes were found to identify more strongly with their role as athletes than women on coeducational campuses. Opportunity and access would appear to play a major role in student involvement.

Another area to take into account when considering student-athlete involvement is scheduling. Watt and Moore (2001) point to the lack of flexibility in scheduling as an issue for many student-athletes. Watt and Moore indicate that while non-athletes are able to schedule classes at mostly convenient times that allow them to become involved, pursue jobs, and socialize, student-athletes do not have this advantage. Ryan (1990) also highlights some of these issues when considering the patterns student-athletes follow. The requirements of participating in athletics often dictate the athlete's schedule and do not allow for much latitude in allocating their time to other endeavors (Ryan, 1990). Watt and Moore go on to explain that the rigid schedule that athletes must follow contributes to their association with the role of an athlete first. This could, in the estimation of Watt and Moore, feed into the negative stereotypes that student-athletes

have become all too familiar with and cause them to form untrue perceptions of their abilities. Ryan (1990) attributes the tendency to underestimate the academic ability of an individual to the negative portrayal of student-athletes and intercollegiate athletics.

Campus Community

Ryan (1990) points to the work of Astin (1985) when discussing the importance of peer groups since changes in students are often a result of such interaction. Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006) state that while student-athletes typically spend a considerable amount of time around one another, it limits their ability to interact with students who do not participate in athletics. While athletics promotes a certain level of inclusion, Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007) show that athletics tend to expose student-athletes to a unique multi-cultural experience.

Student-athlete isolation continues to be a major concern for institutions. Astin (1984) noted that participation in intercollegiate athletics tends to promote isolation that is similar to academic isolation. Ryan (1990) states that athletes have a much different college experience from that of non-athletes, which is attributed in large part to the focus on athletics. Watt and Moore (2001) recognize that residence life plays a major role in student involvement when they point to NCAA legislation that restricts the number of athletes that comprise a residence hall. The NCAA hoped to promote an integration of athletes into the campus community and prevent the negative effects attributed to isolating athletes. Astin (1984) states that residence life provides students with more opportunities to become involved as well as increasing the amount of time they are able to dedicate to various forms of involvement. Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998) reference Chickering and Reisser (1993) who assert that campus communities should

encourage student interaction and provide a positive and supportive environment. The institution that provides its students with the opportunities and services necessary to become involved are considered to be of higher quality than those that do not engage their students (Kuh, 2004). Chickering and Reisser (1993) continue by advocating for communities that have students from diverse backgrounds with unique experiences and believe this model is preferable since it furthers the development process (as cited in Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Ryan (1990) notes that athletic departments that provide student support services have a positive impact on the overall development of student-athletes. There appears to be a positive correlation between intercollegiate athletic participation and emotional health (Ryan, 1990). In addition, Mignano et al. (2006) point to studies by Smith (1990) and Smith, Wolf, Morrison (1995) that have discovered that students who feel supported educationally by their institution tend to invest more time and energy toward their academic pursuits.

Another factor to consider is the tendency of athletes to segregate themselves from non-athletes intentionally. Nishimoto (1997) states that student-athletes create a unique culture independently and view themselves as different from individuals that do not participate in their sport (as cited in Watt & Moore, 2001). This, according to Watt and Moore, causes additional difficulties for student-athletes when it comes to relationship building.

Reasons to Study Division III

Robst and Keil (2000) point out almost immediately the lack of research directed at the Division III level. Most of the research regarding student-athletes pertains to those at the Division I level. However, with nearly 37% of all student-athletes competing in

Division III, analyzing this group could prove to be beneficial (Robst & Keil, 2000). Also, Division III student-athletes share more in common with non-athletes than their Division I counterparts. Many reasons have been attributed to this, among them the absence of financial aid awarded solely on academic achievement. Most Division III athletes are aware that the prospect of becoming a professional athlete is fairly limited. As it is, only two to three percent of student-athletes have professional sports careers (Robst & Keil, 2000). Athletes that participate at the Division I level in non-revenue sports have grade point averages and graduate rates similar to those of non-athletes. This clearly demonstrates the importance of a college education for all athletes regardless of division.

It is important to note the findings of Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006) when staking claim to the academic success and student first focus of Division III. In the study, which was self-reporting, male students, both athletes and non-athletes, at Division III schools reported significantly lower grades than their Division I counterparts (Umbach et al., 2006). Female students, both athletes and non-athletes, across all divisions exhibited no statistical difference in their grades. Richards and Aries (1999) indicate that there are several explanations for variances in grades, noting that the selection of courses and abuse of the academic system could come into play. Richards and Aries (1999) further assert that grades may not fully illustrate the level of academic achievement that has taken place.

Another discrepancy between Division I and III has been in the area of motivation. In a study by Gaston-Gayles (2005), there was a clear disparity between athletic and academic motivation among the divisions. The Division III athletes were as

academically motivated as the non-athletic student population whereas the Division I students exhibited a higher degree of athletic motivation and a lesser degree of academic motivation. The Gaston-Gayles (2005) study cites previous work by Bandura (1977) and Weiner (1984) who examined motivational factors. Bandura's self-efficacy theory claims that people will "...become engaged in tasks they believe they can complete successfully" and tend to avoid those which they perceive will not lead to success (Gaston-Gayles, 2005, p.319). This evidence suggests that student-athletes who believe their academics are more important than athletics will focus more on success in the classroom as opposed to on the field. Weiner's attribution theory maintains that people evaluate whether to take on a particular task in terms of finding causes for the expected outcomes (as cited in Gaston-Gayles, 2005). Gaston-Gayles then goes on to cite Graham (1991) who states "...the most common causal attributes in the achievement domain are ability, effort, task difficulty, luck and help from others" (p. 320).

Gaston-Gayles (2005) emphasizes that the implications of these findings should provide the impetus for colleges to identify those athletes whose academic motivation is at risk and address their needs through the provision of academic support. Interestingly, Gaston-Gayles suggests using the athletic model of analyzing game play and causes of poor performance as a design to formulate academic remediation plans involving the development of successful academic strategies such as time management, study and note-taking skills (Gaston-Gayles, 2005).

The Student Experience

There is little question that participation in athletics qualifies as student involvement on campus. Schroeder (2000) defines involvement as activities that foster a

sense of belonging between the student and institution. There is certainly a connection created for individuals involved with intercollegiate athletics and their institution.

However, the true area of concern lies in the amount of time and energy devoted to a single activity. Schroeder (2000) refers to the work of Astin (1984) who suggests that while student involvement is generally a desirable objective, exclusive participation in an activity can detract from its merits. Ryan (1990) points out that the nature of the demands placed upon a student-athlete have limited their ability to become involved in other activities. A student-athlete typically has less free time available than other students due to the nature of the dual role of a student-athlete.

Another area of consideration involves the perception of students regarding their overall college experience. Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007) illustrate a discrepancy between the perceptions of student-athletes and the reality of their actual experience as evidenced in their research studies. Although student-athletes initially report that they are satisfied with the level of participation in which they have been able to engage, on closer examination, it becomes apparent that reality doesn't bear this out. In fact, most student-athletes do not feel that they have experienced all that they have hoped to during their collegiate career. Through more detailed survey questions, it becomes evident that most student-athletes have cited a variety of activities that they would have liked to pursue if their schedule and time demands had permitted.

Ryan (1990) further substantiates this view as he points to the challenging schedule of student-athletes as a contributing factor limiting the scope of student involvement in non-athletic areas. Additionally, Ryan cites the environment and culture of athletics as an influential element in the selection of athletic activities. Athletes are

encouraged to maintain their physical abilities and conditioning even during off-season. As a result, student-athletes are more likely to choose endeavors that are related to their sport rather than other student activities. These factors combined with the demands of balancing academics and athletics leaves minimal free time to pursue additional activities in other areas (Ryan).

Although Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007) recognize that athletics can preclude or limit participation in other activities, they also acknowledge that athletics do not interfere with the overall development of the students during their college years. In fact, they found that athletic involvement actually fostered the development of many positive attributes. Ryan (1990) concurs with this view and draws upon previous studies by Chu, Segrave, and Becker (1985) and Boyd (1980) to illustrate this point. Chu, Segrave, and Becker (1985) list "...growth in character, maturity, self-respect and pride, respect for others, responsibility and honesty" (as cited in Ryan, 1990, p. 7) as traits that are developed through participation in intercollegiate athletics. Additionally, Boyd (1980) notes that the development of attributes such as "...discipline, self-restraint, concentration, cooperation and sacrifice" (as cited in Ryan 1990, p.7) are fostered through these activities.

Ryan (1990) further asserts that many of the lessons gained through the athletic experience are relevant and applicable to both academic and professional realms. The findings of Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007) are consistent with this view. Their study demonstrated that 95% of the student athletes believe that the qualities they acquired through their athletic participation will serve them in their professional careers. Another

86% believe that the contacts they have made as well as the networking skills they have obtained through athletics will be an asset to their future employment.

Rowan University Research

Two relevant research studies that focused on student-athletes at Rowan University were conducted by Iacovone (2007) and Hanson (2008). Iacovone (2007) and Hanson (2008) each discuss various aspects of Astin's Student Involvement theory (1984) to provide a framework for studying levels of participation by student athletes. They both cite the holistic view of involvement that goes beyond the classroom to include campus activities, place of residence, student government, athletics, honors programs and student-faculty interaction (Astin, 1984).

Iacovone (2007) examined involvement by student-athletes on campus outside of athletics, while Hanson (2008) explored leadership preferences among student-athletes at Rowan University. The studies concluded that student-athletes were involved on campus, but typically in areas that require lower time commitments. Iacovone (2007) noted that study abroad, Greek Life, and student government were areas where most athletes did not become involved. Iacovone also points out that the relationship between student-athletes and faculty is related to academic success. Hanson's (2008) research found that student-athletes at Rowan University were indeed involved in a variety of social and academic activities on campus. Her survey revealed that only a minimal number of students were involved in more time consuming activities such as fraternities or sororities, student government, and college performances. Hanson reported that none of the student-athletes surveyed in her research were involved with studying abroad due to conflicts with participation in athletics.

Summary of the Literature Review

While the majority of research pertaining to student-athletes has occurred at the Division I level, many researchers believe that Division III is an increasingly relevant topic. In recent years the demands placed on student-athletes at the Division III level have increased. Longer seasons, strict practice schedules, and off-season training have become the norm in intercollegiate athletics across the divisions.

Identity plays a major role when examining student involvement. Students choose clubs, organizations, and activities that relate to their personal interests and view of themselves. Student-athletes are unique in the sense that they identify with multiple roles. Gender is an additional component that is relevant for student-athletes, particularly for females. The type of institution a student-athlete attends, the environment they are in, and the expectations that are placed on them all contribute to their choices for the areas they become involved with on and off campus.

Research at the Division III level has been limited to date. These studies have indicated that student-athletes at all levels, and particularly those in non-revenue sports, exhibit many common traits. A missing piece of information in the knowledge base appears to be the involvement patterns student-athletes follow. While these student-athletes are highly involved, their participation is often limited to academic and athletic pursuits. The demands placed on Division III athletes are similar to those of other intercollegiate athletes. These findings display the need for more research in regard to the impact of expectations, role identity, and importance of athletic success on student-athletes at the Division III level.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Context of the Study

The study was conducted at Rowan University, in Glassboro, NJ. Rowan University is a member of the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) which competes in NCAA Division III. Rowan University has an undergraduate population of approximately 10,000 students and offers 58 undergraduate majors, 38 master's degrees, and a doctoral program in educational leadership. Rowan University sponsors 16 intercollegiate teams, seven for men's and nine for women's. Men's teams include baseball, basketball, cross country, football, soccer, swimming and diving, and track and field. The women's teams include basketball, cross country, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, track and field, and volleyball. Rowan University has won 11 national championships in five sports. The NJAC requires student-athletes to maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA in order to remain eligible for intercollegiate competition.

Population and Sample Selection

Rowan University student-athletes competing in intercollegiate athletics during the 2008-2009 academic year comprised the target population for this study. The available population is a convenience sample and accounts only for the respondents of the survey. Fifty percent of the randomly selected student-athletes from all women's

and men's teams were given a survey with equal opportunity to participate. The number of surveys distributed to each team was based on final rosters.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to assess the attitudes of student-athletes towards their involvement in intercollegiate athletics was a survey piloted at Washington State University. The survey was created by Crawford (2007) for a doctoral dissertation at Washington State University. Portions of the survey were taken from the *National Survey of Student Engagement*. The *National Survey of Student Engagement* was designed to assess the level of engagement of students and what they gained from their college experience (Kuh, 2004). Kuh (2004) states that the survey asks students to identify their involvement in activities that are associated with good educational practice. The survey examines areas such as academics, campus activities and programs, student services, and extracurricular pursuits. Permission was obtained for usage of both Dr. Crawford's survey and the items used from the NSSE survey (Appendix B). The survey targeted five focus areas in regards to student-athletes: (a) use of support services as provided by the institution, (b) interaction with faculty, (c) interaction with peers, (d) involvement in the campus environment, and (e) engagement in enriching educational experiences (Crawford, 2007). Crawford conducted a Cronbach Alpha to determine reliability and returned the following coefficients: subscale 1 (.94), subscale 3 (.50), subscale 5 (.62), subscale 6 (.60), and subscale 7 (.40). The welfare of student-athletes was based on one question, and therefore was not calculated. A Cronbach Alpha was calculated for this survey and returned coefficient at the following rate for each of the

subscales: subscale 1 (.91), subscale 3 (.72), subscale 5 (.51), subscale 6 (.62), subscale 7 (.61).

Survey items yielding Cronbach coefficients of .70 or higher are considered acceptable when conducting research (UCLA: Academic Technology Services, Statistical Consulting Group). Subscales 1 (.91) and 3 (.72) meet the criteria. Subscale 6 (.62) covers multidimensional data, which could account for the lower Cronbach coefficient. The items in this portion of the survey were designed to gauge the ability and interest of student-athletes in various activities. These activities are related to each other in the sense that they are opportunities that exist outside of the classroom and off the playing field. However, a student-athlete's ability and desire to participate in study abroad opportunities and completing internships cannot be expected to garner similar responses.

Subscale 7 (.61) covers multidimensional data that accounts for the lower Cronbach scores. When evaluating items pertaining to educational and athletic experience, the Cronbach coefficient returns at .702, which falls within the acceptable range. The absence of academic advising through the athletic department at Rowan University makes the statement not applicable at the institution.

The survey overall was determined to be reliable through a Cronbach analysis. The survey was used to determine a variety of student-athlete attitudes in relation to their educational and athletic experience. The survey specifically targeted student-athletes and their unique dual role at Rowan University. Two items from the National Survey of Student Engagement were included in Subscale 5 which resulted in a .51 reliability coefficient in this instance. However, it should be noted that Subscale 5 covers a variety of measures dealing with the academic experience of the student-athlete. The

relationships between the items were based on the same construct, however, not intended to generate similar responses. The items measure interaction with faculty, classmates, and classroom participation; and while these items are related, they are distinctly separate from one another.

In an effort to account for changes made to the survey to reflect the services offered by Rowan University, a pilot of the survey was conducted. A total of 10 current and former student-athletes were asked to complete the survey and provide feedback regarding the survey and its applicability to Rowan University. The surveys obtained from these student-athletes were not included in the research. The selected student-athletes reported no difficulties in interpreting the statements on the survey. All statements were reported as being applicable to Rowan University.

The survey (Appendix C) was divided into seven sections. The first section focused on obtaining basic demographic information such as gender, year in school, primary sport, and college GPAs. The second section consisted of eight statements that were designed to measure how student-athletes feel about their use of time during a typical week. The answer format for this section was based on a range of hours for each activity.

The third section consisted of five statements that gauged student-athlete attitudes about time use, interaction, and support. The fourth section included seven statements based on interaction with faculty and peers. An additional statement was added in an effort to obtain information regarding missing class time due to athletic participation. The answer format for both sections was based on a Likert scale. The answer options

ranged from “Never” to “Very Often” and respondents were instructed to check the box that most accurately described their feelings.

Section five had four statements that measured the ability of the student-athletes to participate in activities outside of athletics. Six different answer options were presented in an effort to account for a range of possibilities for participating or not participating in the activities.

Section six had a total of seven statements that were divided into two subsections. The first subsection consisted of four items designed around student-athlete satisfaction and effort. The 5-point Likert scale answers ranged from “Very Poor” to “Very Good.” The second subsection included three items based on the overall experience of the student-athletes while at Rowan University. Respondents were given four choices ranging from “Definitely No” to “Definitely Yes.” These items were designed to capture the overall satisfaction of the student-athletes based on their athletic, academic, and extracurricular experiences at Rowan University. Section seven was comprised of 15 statements based on the support services that student-athletes felt helped them the most. This section was modified from the original survey in an effort to reflect the services offered to Rowan University students.

On October 29, 2008 the Institutional Review Board approved the study based on its review of the submission. Appendix A contains a letter from the Institutional Review Board indicating approval of the study.

Data Collection

Surveys were distributed to student-athletes through the Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance. Instructions were provided to the athletic department as well as

student-athletes regarding the purpose of the study. The Assistant Athletic Director distributed surveys to student-athletes from all class standings on February 10, 2009 during a seminar presentation that was completely independent of this research. Completed surveys were collected and returned to the researcher. A total of 180 surveys were returned from this seminar. Surveys were also distributed during a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee meeting on December 1, 2008. A total of 21 surveys were returned from this meeting. No identifying information was collected on the survey. A statement was included on the top of the survey to indicate consent.

Data Analysis

All data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software version 16.0. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, Independent Sample *t*-tests, and Pearson correlations. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations were used in order to display the demographic breakdown of the sample. Frequencies were used to highlight response rates for questions pertaining to student support services, academic, and athletic experience. The Pearson correlations illustrated the relationships between faculty interaction and perceptions of academic success. Independent Sample *t*-tests displayed statistical differences in mean scores and responses between male and female student-athletes regarding opportunities and hours spent on academic, athletic, and social activities.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Profile of the Sample

The subjects for this study were comprised of student-athletes at Rowan University during the 2008-2009 academic year. Overall, 201 of the 250 surveys distributed were completed and returned yielding an 80.4% response rate. A limited number of surveys were partially completed and excluded from data analysis when necessary. Surveys were completed by 96 male students and 105 female students and represented all sports and class years. The freshman class comprised 36% of the population followed by the junior class at 25.5%, sophomore class at 24.5%, senior class at 12%, and graduate and 5th year at 2%. A breakdown based on sport, class year, and cumulative student-athlete GPA is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Respondents by Sport and Class Year

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	5 th /Graduate	Total	GPA
Baseball	4	8	4	3	1	20	3.05
Men's Basketball	1	3	2	2	1	9	3.08
Women's Basketball	5	1	4	1	0	11	3.18
Men's Cross Country	1	0	0	1	0	2	3.38
Women's Cross Country	1	2	1	1	0	5	3.25
Field Hockey	3	2	1	1	0	7	3.40
Football	18	10	11	2	2	43	2.93
Lacrosse	4	6	4	5	0	19	3.41
Men's Soccer	2	2	0	0	0	4	3.59
Women's Soccer	2	0	2	0	0	4	3.56
Softball	6	4	7	2	0	19	3.39
Men's Swimming	3	1	4	1	0	9	3.10
Women's Swimming	6	5	6	3	0	20	3.13
Men's Track	5	2	1	1	0	9	3.30
Women's Track	9	3	0	0	0	12	3.26
Volleyball	2	0	4	1	0	7	3.22
Total	72	49	51	24	4	200	3.18

Analysis of the Data

Research Question 1: Do student-athletes spend more time focused on athletics or academics?

A descriptive analysis revealed that student-athletes spent statistically equal amounts of time focused on academic and athletic pursuits. Table 4.2 shows a comparison of mean responses between male and female student-athletes relevant to academic, athletic, and co-curricular activities.

Table 4.2

Male and Female Student-Athlete Responses for Hours Engaged in Activities

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week: Preparing for class	Male	96	1.70	.796
	Female	103	1.52	.726
As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week: Attending class	Male	95	2.88	1.050
	Female	104	2.55	.749
As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week: Relaxing and Socializing	Male	94	2.84	1.203
	Female	103	2.36	.979
As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week: Attending scheduled practice	Male	94	2.83	1.233
	Female	104	2.81	1.034
As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week: Attending team meetings outside of regular practice	Male	93	1.67	1.164
	Female	104	1.36	.923
As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week: Traveling to away competitions	Male	91	1.85	1.115
	Female	102	1.79	.937
As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week: Practicing on your own without direction or supervision; truly voluntary	Male	94	1.97	1.131
	Female	104	1.24	.599
As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week: Participating in co-curricular activities	Male	93	1.56	.902
	Female	103	1.26	.685

An independent samples *t*-test, shown in Table 4.3, was used to compare mean scores of hours spent on academic and co-curricular activities between male and female student-athletes. The test was calculated at a 99% confidence interval with a critical *t*-value of 2.57. The test showed that male student-athletes devote statistically more time relaxing and socializing, practicing voluntarily, and participating in co-curricular activities than female student-athletes. Relaxing and socializing: male student-athletes ($m = 2.84$, $sd = 1.203$); female student athletes ($m = 2.36$, $sd = .979$) at the .01 level ($t = 3.091$, $df = 195$). Practicing without direction or supervision: male student-athletes ($m = 1.97$, $sd = 1.131$); female student athletes ($m = 1.24$, $sd = .599$) at the .01 level ($t = 5.572$, $df = 196$). Participating in co-curricular activities: male student-athletes ($m = 1.56$, $sd = 0.902$); female student athletes ($m = 1.26$, $sd = .685$) at the .01 level ($t = 2.574$, $df = 194$).

Variances were significantly different and therefore a *t*-test that did not assume equal variances was used for all.

Table 4.3

t-test for Male and Female Student-Athletes

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test of Equality of Means				99% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Relaxing and Socializing	Equal variances assumed	3.078	.081	3.091	195	.002	.481	.156	.076	.886
	Equal variances not assumed			3.062	179.5	.003	.481	.157	.072	.890
Practicing on your own without direction or supervision; truly voluntary	Equal variances assumed	27.106	.000	5.733	196	.000	.728	.127	.398	1.058
	Equal variances not assumed			5.572	138.1	.000	.728	.131	.387	1.069
Participating in co- curricular activities	Equal variances assumed	13.169	.000	2.609	194	.010	.297	.114	.001	.593
	Equal variances not assumed			2.574	170.9	.011	.297	.115	-.004	.598

Research Question 2: Have the services and programs offered through Rowan University adequately addressed the needs of student-athletes?

The majority of student-athletes report that they receive the help they need to succeed and cope with their academic, athletic, and social responsibilities. Table 4.4 shows the response rate for each survey statement in regard to whether student-athletes were provided with help to succeed academically, athletically, and socially. Survey items

were designed to ascertain whether Rowan University provided adequate support services to student-athletes to enhance their success.

Table 4.4

Provided with help to Succeed Academically, Athletically, and Socially

As a student-athlete to what extent:	Never		Very Little		Sometimes		Often		Very Often	
		%		%		%		%		%
Are you provided the support you need to succeed academically	2	1	10	5	56	27.9	95	47.3	38	18.9
Are you provided help to cope with your athletic responsibilities	2	1	11	5.5	57	28.4	88	43.8	41	20.4
Are you provided the support you need to thrive socially	2	1	12	6	60	29.9	96	47.8	30	14.9

Research Question 3: Are there areas of student life that student-athletes have missed out on due to their participation in athletics?

A descriptive analysis was conducted for the interpretation of whether student-athletes have missed out on any opportunities due to their participation in intercollegiate athletics. Table 4.5 shows that a combined 65.2% of student-athletes positively indicated that they believe athletic participation had caused them to miss out on opportunities. Table 4.6 shows that Study Abroad was the activity that caused the greatest conflict with athletic participation, with 43.1% of student-athletes indicating they were interested in participating but a conflict was caused by athletics. Thirty-six and two-tenths percent of student-athletes indicated that they were able to complete an internship while 30.1% noted a conflict existed with their participation in intercollegiate athletics.

Table 4.5

Have you Missed out on any Opportunities or Experiences Because of your Involvement in Athletics

	Definitely No	Probably No	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes	Total
Male	8	30	35	22	95
Female	11	17	57	17	102
Total	19	47	92	39	197

Table 4.6

Ability to Participate in Study Abroad and Complete a Practicum, Internship, Field Experience, Co-Op, or Clinical Assignment

	Interested & able to participate	Lack of awareness	Alternate experience provided by athletics	Interested, conflict caused by athletics	Interested, no support from peers	No interest
Study Abroad	19	14	7	85	5	67
Complete a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment	71	23	15	59	7	21

Research Question 4: How do student-athletes rate their overall college experience?

The descriptive analysis for overall college experience showed favorable responses. The majority of Rowan University student-athletes reported a positive opinion in regards to their educational and athletic experience. Tables 4.7 and 4.8 contain the response rates for questions pertaining to education and athletic experience at Rowan University.

Table 4.7

Overall, how Would you rate: Your entire Educational and Athletic Experience at Rowan University

	Very Poor	%	Poor	%	Fair	%	Good	%	Very Good	%
Academic	1	.5	8	4	52	25.9	94	46.8	45	22.4
Athletic	3	.5	8	4	41	20.4	82	40.8	65	32.3

Table 4.8

Based on your Academic and Athletic experience, if you could start over again, Would you still attend Rowan University

	Definitely No	%	Probably No	%	Probably Yes	%	Definitely Yes	%
Academic	4	2	24	11.9	112	55.7	59	29.4
Athletic	7	3.5	22	10.9	95	47.3	75	37.3

A correlation between athletic and educational experience exists as shown in Tables 4.9 and 4.10. The moderate correlation between athletic and academic experience has a Pearson correlation coefficient r of .444, while the Pearson correlation coefficient r is .497 for starting over. Since the variables are not curvilinear, a Pearson correlation coefficient was applied. These values indicate a potential relationship between academics and athletics in terms of student experience. Educational satisfaction can be a factor in overall athletic satisfaction and vice versa. The correlation further illustrates that both athletics and academics play a role in a student-athlete's perception of their college experience and their decision to attend Rowan University.

Table 4.9

Correlation between Educational and Athletic Experience

		Overall, how would you rate: Your entire educational experience at Rowan University
Overall, how would you rate: Your entire athletic experience at Rowan University?	Pearson	.444
	Correlation	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	199

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.10

Correlation between Educational and Athletic Experience: Starting Over

		Based on your educational experience, if you could start over again, would you still attend Rowan University?
Based on your athletic experience, if you could start over again, would you still attend Rowan University?	Pearson	.497
	Correlation	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	199

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 5: Have athletics played a positive role in helping student-athletes to determine and meet their goals?

A descriptive analysis reveals that the majority of student-athletes are most often influenced developmentally and through goal creation by athletics personnel. Table 4.11 shows the student services identified by student-athletes as having influenced their development and goals. The data suggest that the services or individuals that influence student-athletes do so in multiple areas of development. Athletics personnel and the programs provided through athletics have the greatest influence on the development and fulfillment of goals for student-athletes. Faculty members played a significant role in helping student-athletes with academic goals. Thirty-nine and four-tenths percent of

student-athletes stated that faculty members were responsible for helping them meet their academic goals. A minimum of 70% of student-athletes indicated that athletics personnel were responsible for influencing their physical, emotional, and mental development.

Table 4.11

Student Services that Influence Student-Athletes

	Athletics Personnel		Career development programs provided by athletics		CAP Center		Seminars offered through major		Faculty Members	
		%		%		%		%		%
Mature mentally	127	71.8	10	5.6	10	5.6	7	4.0	23	13.0
Mature emotionally	134	77.5	9	5.2	7	4.0	6	3.5	17	9.8
Mature physically	156	87.2	9	5.0	3	1.7	5	2.8	6	3.4
Exposure to events	124	70.5	15	8.5	10	5.7	12	6.8	15	8.5
Identify personal goals	99	53.5	9	4.9	24	13.0	19	10.3	34	18.4
Plan for attainment of personal goals	82	45.3	16	8.8	34	18.8	11	6.1	38	21.0
Meet personal goals	99	55.3	12	6.7	21	11.7	9	5.0	38	21.2
Meet academic goals	55	30.9	12	6.9	31	17.7	9	5.1	69	39.4

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the attitudes of student-athletes at Rowan University towards opportunities provided through participation in intercollegiate athletics during the 2008-2009 academic year. It also explored student-athlete involvement in activities outside of athletics including the factors that impacted upon their level of participation. Demographic information was collected and utilized in conjunction with the research questions. All subjects were student-athletes at Rowan University and ranged in class status from freshman to graduate students.

A seven section questionnaire, that included an implied consent form, was distributed to 250 student-athletes on two separate occasions. The survey consisted of 50 items designed to examine student-athlete perceptions regarding their athletic and educational experiences, as well as factors influencing involvement due to participation in intercollegiate athletics at Rowan University. A total of 201 surveys were completed, providing an 80.4% return rate.

Descriptive statistics, correlation, and Independent Sample *t*-tests were used to interpret the data obtained from the surveys. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences computer software version 16.0 was the program used to analyze the data. Statistically significant correlations were noted appropriately.

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1: Do student-athletes spend more time focused on athletics or academics?

This study supports the findings of Mignano et al. (2006) that found student-athletes who feel supported by their institution invest more time and energy into academics. This study revealed a positive correlation ($r = .409, p = .000$) at a $p < .01$ level between feeling supported by faculty and receiving support to succeed academically. This finding suggests that student-athletes who have the support of their instructors are more likely to thrive academically and is consistent with the work of Iacovone (2007) with Rowan University student-athletes. Iacovone discovered that student athletes placed a major emphasis upon the availability of faculty beyond the classroom. This was further documented by a significant correlation in the study between student-faculty relationships and the students' grade point averages ($r = -.198, p = .050$) at a $p < .05$ level. Iacovone also points to research by Astin (1984) which reinforced the findings that students report a significant relationship between their overall satisfaction with their college experience and positive student faculty relationships (Iacovone, 2007). Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007) noted in their study that the majority of student-athletes consider themselves as athletes' first and students second. This study suggests that student-athletes at Rowan University spend similar amounts of time on athletics and academic pursuits. Gaston-Gayles (2005) states that student-athletes will spend time on activities where they feel success is most likely. Given the equal distribution of time it is plausible that academic and athletic motivation are similar for Rowan University student-athletes. Rowan University student-athletes surveyed yielded a combined GPA of 3.18,

however, as Richards and Aries (1999) illustrate, grades are not the only measure that should be considered when assessing academic achievement. Overall, Rowan University student-athletes are spending equal amounts of time on academics and athletic endeavors.

Research Question 2: Have the services and programs offered through Rowan University adequately addressed the needs of student-athletes?

The study showed that the majority of student-athletes felt they received the support necessary to succeed academically, athletically, and socially. Crawford (2007) notes that 90% of the surveyed student-athletes reported receiving the support necessary to cope with their academic and athletic responsibilities. By contrast, less than 65% of Rowan University student-athletes reported receiving this support “Often” or “Very Often.” Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998) reference Chickering and Reisser (1993) who assert that campus communities should encourage student interaction and provide a positive and supportive environment. Forty-eight percent of student-athletes indicated that they attend campus events and activities “Sometimes.”

Research Question 3: Are there areas of student life that student-athletes have missed out on due to their participation in athletics?

The study revealed that the majority of student-athletes felt that athletics have caused them to miss out on opportunities, which is consistent with the findings of Potuto & O’Hanlon (2007). Their study exposed a discrepancy between what student-athletes initially perceive as their level of involvement in other activities and the reality of their participation. On closer inspection with more detailed questions, the researchers discovered that student-athletes were in fact able to identify a number of activities they would have enjoyed but were unable to due to the demands of athletics (Potuto &

O'Hanlon 2007). Female student-athletes indicated they missed out on opportunities because of athletic participation more than male student-athletes at a rate of 72.5% to 60%. Male student-athletes spent statistically more time relaxing and socializing, practicing voluntarily, and participating in co-curricular activities than female student-athletes. Mignano et al. (2006) found that women's colleges provide more opportunities for female student-athletes due to the lack of a male presence on campus. This would suggest that opportunity and access play a significant role in determining participation for Rowan University female student-athletes as well. Forty-three and one tenth of Rowan University student-athletes indicated an interest in study abroad but were restricted due to participation in intercollegiate athletics. Similarly, Hanson's (2008) research at Rowan University found that although student-athletes were involved in some activities outside of athletics, they did report missing out on the opportunity to study abroad due to the demands of their athletic schedules. This study supports the findings of Iacovone (2007) and Hanson (2008) who found that student-athlete involvement outside of athletics is typically relegated to activities that require a minimal investment of time. Student-athletes reported missing the chance to participate in study abroad programs, fraternities and sororities, fine arts productions and student government citing the large commitment of time these type of activities require. Crawford (2007) notes that the time away from campus required for study abroad makes it nearly impossible for student-athletes to participate. Crawford (2007) goes on to state that student-athletes should be able to participate in internship experiences that contribute to their career development. Thirty-six and two-tenths percent of Rowan University student-athletes indicated that they were able to complete such experiences. However, the second highest total of student-athletes

indicated that a conflict was caused between athletics and completion of internship type experiences. The findings of the study indicated that student-athletes have missed out on involvement in other activities are supported by the research conducted by Watt & Moore (2001 and by Ryan (1990). Watt & Moore (2001) note that the scheduling demands placed on student-athletes often impinge upon their availability to participation in a wider array of activities. Ryan (1990) also stresses that the structured schedules of athletes do not allow much latitude in fitting in other activities. The goal is to find a balance for student-athletes in their often rigorous and structured schedules.

Research Question 4: How do student-athletes rate their overall college experience?

Ninety-five and one-tenth percent of student-athletes rate their educational experience at Rowan University as “Fair” or better while 85.1% would start over again at Rowan University if given the opportunity to do so. Ninety-three and 5-tenths percent of student-athletes rate their athletic experience at Rowan University as “Fair” or better while 84.6% would start over again at Rowan University if given the opportunity to do so.

Iacovone (2007) also examined student satisfaction at Rowan in regard to social and academic involvement and campus atmosphere and found satisfaction was similar in each of these dimensions. They reported the most satisfaction with involvement in religious activities, student faculty relationships and with the campus environment. Schroeder (2000) characterizes involvement as activities that cultivate a sense of belonging between the student and institution and notes the connection students develop with their institution through their participation in athletics. The student-athletes in this

study at Rowan University reported a positive college experience by indicating that they would choose to attend the institution again if given the opportunity. This perception was indicative of findings by Kuh (2004) that suggest that colleges that provide students with the opportunities to become involved are considered to be of higher quality than institutions that do not engage their students. The efforts of the athletic department and Rowan University to contribute to the development and engagement of student-athletes are ultimately reflected in overall satisfaction of student experience at the institution.

Research Question 5: Have athletics played a positive role in helping student-athletes to determine and meet their goals?

The study suggests that athletics personnel were the primary influence for student-athletes in the areas of physical, emotional, and mental development as well as the planning and attainment of personal goals. A minimum of 70% of student-athletes indicated that athletics personnel have influences their physical, emotional, and mental development. Thirty-nine and four-tenths percent of student-athletes stated that faculty members were responsible for helping them attain their academic goals.

These findings are consistent with those of Ryan (1990), who also suggests that athletic departments that provide student services to student-athletes contribute positively to their overall development. He cites a positive correlation between intercollegiate athletic participation and emotional health. Mignano et al. (2006) references studies by Smith (1990) and Smith et al. (1995) who have discovered that students who feel a sense of educational support from their college tend to invest more time and energy toward their academic endeavors.

Potuto & O'Hanlon (2007) found that athletic involvement fostered the development of many positive attributes. Ryan (1990) agrees with this view and cites studies by Chu, Segrave, and Becker (1985) and Boyd (1980) who note that traits such as character development, maturity, pride, respect for self and others, honesty and a sense of responsibility are fostered through participation in athletics (Ryan 1990). Furthermore, Boyd (1980) indicates that athletic involvement promotes the development of attributes like discipline, restraint, concentration, sacrifice and cooperation (Ryan 1990).

Ryan (1990) suggests that academic and professional aspects benefit student-athletes as they apply the lessons they gained through the athletic experience to these areas. Findings from Potuto & O'Hanlon (2007) support this view as demonstrated that 95% of student-athletes feel the qualities they gained from athletic participation will help them in their professional careers. They also indicated that the networking skills acquired through athletics will be a future asset to their professions. Based upon the student-athletes perceptions, it would seem that athletic participation encourages the development of a variety of positive attributes (Potuto & O'Hanlon 2007). Student-athletes spend a considerable amount of time engaged in athletic pursuits and are therefore influenced considerably by coaches and other members of the athletic department.

Conclusions

The results of this study confirmed a growing number of studies focused on the student-athlete. First, student-athletes that felt they are supported by faculty and members of the athletic department are more likely to succeed academically. This highlights the importance of faculty and student interaction as well as the development of academic strategies for student-athletes.

The majority of student-athletes at Rowan University reported that athletic participation has caused them to miss out on opportunities. It is important to recognize that female student-athletes report greater missed opportunities than male student-athletes. The underlying reasons for the differences exhibited between the genders were not examined in this study.

Astin's emphasis on the availability of time as a factor essential to increased involvement was evident with student-athletes at Rowan University. The student-athletes indicated that the demands upon their time required by athletic participation had caused them to miss out on opportunities. The findings of this study bear out the qualitative and quantitative elements noted in Astin's (1984) postulates of Involvement Theory. Astin noted that student-athletes were very involved on a quantitative level through the time commitments of athletics but to a lesser degree on a qualitative level as athletic participation precluded participation in other activities. Rowan University student-athletes tended to avoid time consuming activities such as study abroad and internships.

Rowan University student-athletes reported having a positive overall experience. The majority of student-athletes surveyed responded that both their educational and athletic experience was positive since 25.9% academically and 20.4% athletically reported "Fair," 46.8% academically and 40.8% athletically reported "Good," and 22.4% academically and 32.3% athletically reported "Very Good." Further, the majority of student-athletes indicated that they would attend Rowan University again if they were given the opportunity to start their college career with 85.1% reporting on an academic basis and 84.6% on an athletic basis.

The satisfaction reported by student-athletes at Rowan University coupled with their willingness to attend Rowan University again emphasizes Astin's (1984) conclusion that athletes expressed satisfaction in regard to academics, the learning environment, friendships, and college administration. The reported satisfaction by Rowan University student-athletes in both the academic and athletic realms is consistent with Astin's involvement theory (1984) that described the overall college experience as a combination of academics, participation in activities, and interaction with faculty and other students. Astin links this involvement as a key element of student satisfaction and success supports the findings that Rowan University student-athletes reported their satisfaction from involvement with athletic and academic interactions.

The majority of student-athletes indicated that athletics personnel had the greatest impact in overall development and planning for and attaining goals. This emphasizes the importance of providing services and programs to student-athletes through the athletic department. Further, it is vital that athletics personnel are properly trained in a variety of areas to assist student-athletes with a number of developmental issues.

Rowan University student-athletes reported that athletics personnel, including coaches and administrators, contribute significantly to their development as students, athletes, and individuals. Astin (1984) indicates that student interaction with faculty and administrators is an important element of success and satisfaction. The role of faculty and administration cannot be understated when assessing involvement among student-athletes. The unique dual role of student-athletes necessitates engagement on both fronts to ensure their success academically, athletically, and socially. Faculty, administration, and athletics personnel serve as mentors for student-athletes and are a valuable resource

for students who should encourage their involvement and overall development in a positive and productive manner.

Recommendations for Practice

The following are suggestions for practice based on the results of this study:

1. Implementation of a summer study abroad program that allows student-athletes to participate and earn educational credits towards their degree.
2. Comprehensive orientation program for student-athletes to inform them about the services and opportunities available through the athletic department and student life at Rowan University.
3. A program addressing the leadership, academic, and social opportunities for female student-athletes should be put into place.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings and conclusions developed by the research through this study are as follows:

1. Additional studies should be conducted regarding the discrepancy between male and female student-athletes and missed opportunities due to athletic participation.
2. Studies that analyze the types of campus events and activities that student-athletes participate in outside of athletics.
3. A qualitative study that focuses on the types of programs and services that are needed to reduce the number of missed opportunities experienced by student-athletes.
4. Identify specific aspects of athletics personnel and services that contribute to the development of student-athletes.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



October 29, 2008

Mark Fusiak
454 Penn Avenue North
Forked River, NJ 08731

Dear Mark Fusiak:

In accordance with the University's IRB policies and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to inform you that the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your project:

IRB application number: 2009-012

Project Title: Student-Athletes at Rowan University: Assessing Involvement Factors and Opportunities Provided through Athletic Participation

In accordance with federal law, this approval is effective for **one calendar year** from the date of this letter. If your research project extends beyond that date or if you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Please retain copies of consent forms for this research for three years after completion of the research.

If, during your research, you encounter any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, you must report this immediately to the Dr. Harriet Hartman, (Hartman@rowan.edu or call 856-256-4500, ext. 3787).

If you have any administrative questions, please contact Karen Heiser (heiser@rowan.edu or 856-256-5150).

Sincerely,

Harriet Hartman, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

HH/klh

c: Burt Sisco, Educational Leadership, Education Hall

Office of Research
Bole Hall Annex
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701

856-256-5150
856-256-4425 fax

APPENDIX B

Usage Agreement Form



**National Survey
of Student Engagement**

***The College Student Report*
Item Usage Agreement**

The National Survey of Student Engagement's (NSSE) survey instrument, *The College Student Report*, is copyrighted and the copyright is owned by The Trustees of Indiana University. Any use of survey items contained within *The College Student Report* is prohibited without prior written permission from Indiana University. When fully executed, this Agreement constitutes written permission from the University, on behalf of NSSE, for the party named below to use an item or items from *The College Student Report* in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

In consideration of the mutual promises below, the parties hereby agree as follows:

- 1) The University hereby grants Mark Fusiak ("Licensee") a nonexclusive, worldwide, irrevocable license to use, reproduce, distribute, publicly display and perform, and create derivatives from, in all media now known or hereafter developed, the item(s) listed in the proposal attached as Exhibit A, solely for the purpose of including such item(s) in the survey activity described in Exhibit A, which is incorporated by reference into this Agreement. This license does not include any right to sublicense others. This license only covers the survey instrument, time frame, population, and other terms described in Exhibit A. Any different or repeated use of the item(s) shall require an additional license.
- 2) In exchange for the license granted in section 1, Licensee agrees:
 - a) there will be no licensing fee to use NSSE items for the purposes described in Exhibit A;
 - b) to provide to NSSE frequency distributions and means on the licensed item(s);
 - c) on the survey form itself, and in all publications or presentations of data obtained through the licensed item(s), to include the following citation: "Items xx and xx used with permission from *The College Student Report*, National Survey of Student Engagement, Copyright 2001-08 The Trustees of Indiana University";
 - d) to provide to NSSE a copy of any derivatives of, or alterations to, the item(s) that Licensee makes for the purpose of Licensee's survey ("modified items"), for NSSE's own nonprofit, educational purposes, which shall include the use of the modified items in *The College Student Report* or any other survey instruments, reports, or other educational or professional materials that NSSE may develop or use in the future. Licensee hereby grants the University a nonexclusive, worldwide, irrevocable, royalty-free license to use, reproduce, distribute, create derivatives from, and publicly display and perform the modified items, in any media now known or hereafter developed; and
 - e) to provide to NSSE, for its own nonprofit, educational purposes, a copy of all reports, presentations, analyses, or other materials in which the item(s) licensed under this



National Survey of Student Engagement

Agreement, or modified items, and any responses to licensed or modified items, are presented, discussed, or analyzed. NSSE shall not make public any data it obtains under this subsection in a manner that identifies specific institutions or individuals, except with the consent of the Licensee.

3) This Agreement expires on June 30, 2009.

The undersigned hereby consent to the terms of this Agreement and confirm that they have all necessary authority to enter into this Agreement.

For The Trustees of Indiana University:

Alexander C. McCormick
Director
National Survey of Student Engagement

11/17/2008
Date

For Licensee:

Mark Fusiak
Graduate Student
Rowan University

2/25/09
Date

APPENDIX C
Survey Instrument

STUDENT-ATHLETE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE SURVEY

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested. Your completion of this survey constitutes informed consent and your willingness to participate.

Section I: General Demographic Information

Primary Sport: _____ Gender: _____

Year in School: 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____ 4th _____ 5th _____ Cumulative College GPA: _____

Section II

As a student, how many hours do you spend during a typical week:	0-7	8-15	16-23	24-31	32+
Preparing for class*					
Attending class					
Relaxing and socializing *					
Attending scheduled practice					
Attending team meetings outside of regular practice					
Traveling to away competitions					
Practicing on your own without direction or supervision; truly voluntary					
Participating in co-curricular activities*					

Section III

As a student, to what extent:	Never	Very Little	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Are you provided the support you need to help you succeed academically					
Are you provided help to cope with your athletic responsibilities					
Are you provided help to cope with your academic responsibilities					
Are you provided the support you need to thrive socially					
Do you attend campus events and activities					

Section IV

As a student, how often:	Never	Very Little	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Do you ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions					
Do you attend class without completing readings or assignments					
Do you work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments*					
Do you discuss grades or assignments with an instructor*					
Do you discuss career plans with an athletics staff member					
Do you feel supported by faculty members and instructors as a student-athlete					
Do you miss class due to traveling					

Section V

Consider your routine as a student-athlete, then consider the following activities and check the box that best describes your interest or ability to participate in the following activities	Interested & able to participate	Lack of awareness	Alternate experience provided by athletics	Interested, but conflict caused by involvement in athletics	Interested but no support from peers	No Interest
Attendance at an art exhibit, gallery, theater performance, speaker, or other on-campus event						
Study Abroad						
Complete a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment						
Do community service or volunteer work						

Section VI

Overall, how would you rate:	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
The quality of the academic advising you have received through the athletic department					
The quality of the academic advising you have received from the advisor you are assigned through your major					
Your entire educational experience at Rowan University					
Your entire athletic experience at Rowan University					
	Definitely No	Probably No	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes	
Based on your athletic experience, if you could start over again, would you still attend Rowan University?					
Based on your educational experience, if you could start over again, would you still attend Rowan University?*					
Have you missed out on any opportunities or experiences because of your involvement in athletics?					

Section VII

Pick one student service listed to the right that most helped you:	Athletics Personnel	Career development programs provided by athletics	CAP Center	Seminars offered through major	Faculty members
Identify your personal goals					
Plan for attainment of your personal goals					
Meet your personal goals					
Develop independence					
Identify your academic goals					
Plan for attainment of your academic goals					
Meet your academic goals					
Develop strong communication skills with your coaches					
Develop strong communication skills with your instructors					
Identify your career goals					
Plan for attainment of your career goals					
Mature mentally					
Mature emotionally					
Mature physically					
Exposed you to events that have resulted in your personal growth					

Highlighted and * Items are from the NSSE.